

Here are three widely held expectations from *Foundations*, all from the subdomain Expressive Language:

- Children begin to use verbal and non-verbal language (gestures, devices, signs, and picture symbols) to communicate for multiple purposes (e.g., to express wants, needs, ideas, feelings, and to relate personal information and experiences).
- Children begin to initiate and engage in conversations.
- Children begin to use increasingly complex and varied language structures, sentences, and vocabulary.

Consider this scenario:

The teacher uses “silent lunch” as a means of punishment when the class has been “talking too much” or “talking too loud.”

**How do we encourage oral language development if we discourage talking? What is “talking too much” after all?**

Sometimes our expectations for children do not reflect developmentally appropriate practice. This teacher first should re-examine his/her expectations for children, and then compare them to NC’s widely held expectations. Then, the teacher should use strategies that truly foster expressive language.

Exercise:

1. Refer to *Foundations* for the Strategies for Early Educators AND Families for the subdomain Expressive Language.
2. Choose at least three of these strategies that this teacher could use to help children develop the three widely held expectations bulleted above.

NOTE: “Making the Connection – Language Development and Communication” in the box above lists specific guidelines, standards, objectives, etc., all of which support better practice.